

# MISSIONARY HEROES COURSE

LIFE STORIES OF GREAT MISSIONARIES FOR  
TEEN AGE BOYS

ARRANGED IN PROGRAMS

## MARY SLESSOR

**The White Queen of Calabar**

SOURCE BOOK

**"MARY SLESSOR of CALABAR"**

**By W. P. LIVINGSTONE**

*Program Prepared by*

FLOYD L. CARR

BAPTIST BOARD OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF MISSIONARY EDUCATION  
276 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY



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*Program based upon "MARY SLESSOR OF CALABAR"*

by W. P. LIVINGSTONE

Doran, \$2.00

## FOREWORD

THE *Missionary Heroes Course* for Boys meets a real need. It is a series of missionary programs for boys, based on great biographies which every boy should know. Course Number One, now available, provides programs for the ensuing twelve months and may be used in the monthly meetings of boys' groups. Other courses are in preparation and will be issued for subsequent years.

It is suggested that the leader purchase three copies of each leaflet; one to be kept for reference and the other two to be cut up to provide each boy with his assigned part. In order to tie together the life incidents as they are presented by the boys, the leader should master the facts outlined in the biographical sketch and read carefully the volume upon which the program is based. These volumes are missionary classics and may be made the basis of a worth-while library of Christian adventure.

Boys are keenly interested in stories of adventure and achievement and it is hoped that participation in the programs will lead many of the lads to read these great missionary biographies. Attention is called to the eleven other life-story programs in the series now available for Course Number One, and to the series now in preparation for the ensuing year, both of which are listed on the last page. The books upon which these programs are based can be ordered from the nearest literature headquarters. Portraits of these missionary heroes will also be made available for purchase.

While these programs have been developed to meet the needs of boys' organizations of all types—i.e., Organized Classes, Boy Scouts, Knights of King Arthur, Kappa Sigma Pi, etc.—they were especially prepared for the chapters of the *Royal Ambassadors*, a missionary organization for teen age boys, originating in the southland and recently adapted to the needs of the Northern Baptist Convention by the Department of Missionary Education. We commend these materials to all lovers of boys.

WILLIAM A. HILL.



## PROGRAM FOR MEETING

1. Scripture Reading: Psalm 103. This Psalm was sung at the first communion service at Ekenge on Sunday, August 5, 1903, the fifteenth anniversary of Mary Slessor's arrival at the new station. (See page 190 of "Mary Slessor of Calabar," by W. P. Livingstone.)
2. Prayer.
3. Hymn: "Crown Him With Many Crowns." This hymn reflects the spirit of Mary Slessor who, when presented with the badge of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, wrote home saying: "Don't think that there is any difference in my designation. I am Mary Mitchell Slessor, nothing more and none other than the unworthy, unprofitable, but most willing, servant of the King of Kings," (see pages 310-313 of the above book).
4. Introduction to the Life Story\* based on pages 1-16).
5. Mary Slessor Volunteers for Calabar (pages 17-18).
6. Unpromising Beginnings at Ekenge, Okoyong (pages 65-66).
7. Winning Her First Victory (pages 70-71).
8. Building the First Church in Okoyong (pages 86-87).
9. Combating the Ordeal by Poison (pages 101-102).
10. Serving as a Peace-Maker (pages 110-112).
11. Combating the Murder of Twins (pages 124-126).
12. Summarizing the Progress Made (pages 159, 159-161).
13. The First Communion at Ekenge (pages 190-191).
14. Appointed as a British Magistrate (pages 235-236, 236-237).
15. Death of Mary Slessor (pages 343-344).
16. A Summary of Her Achievements (pages 348-350).

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\* The leader should read both the brief sketch in this leaflet and "Mary Slessor of Calabar," by W. P. Livingstone, in order, as the program progresses, to fill in the gaps between the assignments.

## SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF MARY SLESSOR

MARY MITCHELL SLESSOR was born on December 2, 1848, in a humble home in Gilcomston, a suburb of Aberdeen, Scotland. Her father was a shoemaker, but was handicapped by intemperance. Her mother had been brought up in a home of refinement and was a devout woman, keenly interested in the missionary enterprise. The father's habits compelled the mother to enter the mill after the removal to Dundee and at eleven years of age Mary Slessor began to work in the mill, giving one half of each day to the mill and one half to the school. At the age of fourteen, she qualified as a "weaver" and eventually was the mainstay of the home.

Through these years of toil and preparation, she managed to read many books and devote much of her time to her successive classes of boys from the slums. But the call of the mission field was ever upon her heart and in May, 1875, she offered her services to the Foreign Mission Board of the United Presbyterian Church. She was accepted and appointed to the Calabar field with the provision that she take a three months' preparatory course at Edinburgh. On August 5th, 1876, she took leave of her mother and sister and sailed from Liverpool on the *Ethiopia*.

Mary Slessor arrived at Duke Town, Calabar, Africa, September 11, 1876. Calabar was a "sphere of influence" of Great Britain's, but there was as yet no established government and the natives were living under the most uncivilized conditions. Mission stations had been established in Calabar for thirty years, but the influence of the stations was local and limited.

For three years she continued to serve as a teacher in the day-school at Duke Town and in June 1879, returned to Dundee on her furlough. Upon her return to Calabar, she was placed in charge of the station at Old Town. Here she was face to face with the terrible evils of the land, polygamy, twin-murder, ordeal by poison, slavery and intemperance, and she attacked these evils with all the intensity and resource of her magnetic personality. The strain of the struggle, combined with African fever, told upon her health and in April 1883, she went to Scotland for a year's rest.



On her return she was transferred to Creek Town, where she spent the final four years of her preparation for the larger work of the future. Her great heart had led her to welcome to her household one after another orphaned child, until her permanent group numbered five. In addition to these she took temporary charge, from time to time, of discarded twins and other babes. The years were filled with duties well done and crowned with evidences of progress. She longed, however, to occupy new territory, and, in response to her request, was authorized to open work in the Okoyong district.

The difficulties of the new work may be judged from an extract from one of her letters: "I am going to a new tribe up country, a fierce, cruel people, and everyone tells me that they will kill me. But I don't fear any hurt—only to combat their savage customs will require courage and firmness on my part." On August 4, 1888, she arrived at Ekenge, Okoyong, which was to be "home" for fourteen years. Her first great achievement was the establishment of friendly trade relations between Okoyong and Calabar, in itself a miracle and a triumph in generalship. Winning the support of King Eyo, she was able to modify, and eventually abolish, the most objectionable of their tribal customs. Her report outlines the accomplishments after seven years of love and labor—the cessation of slave-stealing, a changed attitude toward infanticide and twin-murder, and the increasing sacredness of life and property. In 1896, she moved the station to Akpap to more effectively oversee the districts.

In 1902, when in her fifty-fourth year, she resolved to hand over the established work in Okoyong to other hands and press forward into the region bordering the Enyong Creek. This region had formerly been a notorious center in the slave traffic and was still dominated by superstition and savagery. She advanced from outpost to outpost, establishing centers of influence at Itu, Arochuku, Ikotobung, Okpo, Odot and Asang and with Use as a base, reached out into the Ibibio region. The British Government was steadily extending its sovereignty and, in response to the urgent request of the District Commissioner, she accepted in May 1905, the appointment of magistrate.

In 1910, when sixty-two years of age, she pressed on beyond the occupied region to a new center—a town called Ikpe. An earlier utterance might be cited to interpret her pioneering spirit: "I feel drawn on and on by the magnetism of this land of dense darkness and mysterious weird forest." But she had overtaxed her strength and symptoms of heart weakness de-

veloped. A trip to the Canary Islands remade her for the time and she returned to her absorbing work. But the fever seized her again on January 8, 1915, and five days later "The Great Mother" entered the presence of the King. Her life-story is the finest exemplification of one of her great utterances: "Prayer can do anything; let us try its power." Single-handed, relying upon Divine power, she transformed a vast area from savagery to semi-civilization and from fetichism and witchcraft to Christianity.



## INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF MARY SLESSOR

*Reprinted from "Mary Slessor of Calabar"*

*by W. P. Livingstone*

*By permission of the publishers, George H. Doran Company*

### *Mary Slessor Volunteers for Calabar. (P. 17-18.)*

Early in 1874, the news of the death of Dr. Livingstone stirred the land; it was followed by a wave of missionary enthusiasm; and the call for workers for the dark continent thrilled many a heart. It thrilled Mary Slessor into action. She reviewed the situation. Her sisters were now in good situations, and she saw her way to continue her share in the support of the home. What this loyal determination implied she did not guess then, but it was to have a large share in shaping her life. Broaching the subject to her mother, she obtained a glad consent. One or two of her church friends were lukewarm; others, like Mr. Logie and Mr. Smith, encouraged her. The former, who was deeply interested in foreign missions and soon afterwards became a member of the Foreign Mission Committee, promised to look after her affairs during her sojourn abroad.

In May 1875, she offered her services to the Foreign Mission Board. Her heart was set on Calabar, but so eager was she to be accepted that she said she would be willing to go to any other field. Women agents had long been engaged in Calabar. The first, Miss Miller, had gone out with Mr. Waddell in 1849—she became the "Mammy" Sutherland who did such noble service—and they were playing an ever more important part, and were stated to be both "economical and effective." Requests had just been made for additions to the staff. The application was, therefore, opportune. Her personality, and the accounts given of her character and work, made such an impression on the officials that they reported favorably to the Board, and she was accepted as a teacher for Calabar and told to continue her studies in Dundee. In December, it was decided to bring

her to Edinburgh, at the expense of the Board, for three months, for special preparation. . . .

The night before she left Dundee, in March 1876, she stood, a tearful figure, at the mouth of the "close" where she lived. "Good-bye," she said to a friend and then passionately, "Pray for me!"

### *Unpromising Beginnings at Ekenge, Okoyong. (P. 65-66.)*

The dawn came to Creek Town grey and wet. The rain fell in torrents, and the negroes, moving about with the packages, grumbled and quarrelled. Wearied and unrefreshed after her sleepless night, Mary was not in the best of spirits, and she was glad to see King Eyo, who had come to supervise the loading and packing of the canoe; his kind eyes, cheery smile, and sympathetic words did her good, and her courage revived. Few of the natives wished her God-speed. One young man said with a sob in his voice, "I will constantly pray for you, but you are courting death." Not great faith for a Christian perhaps, but her own faith at the moment was not so strong that she could afford to cast a stone at him. As the hours wore on, the air of depression became general, and when the party was about to start, Mr. Goldie suddenly decided to send one of the Mission staff to accompany her on the journey. Mr. Bishop, the printer, who was standing by, volunteered, and there and then stepped into the canoe. Mary and her retinue of five children stowed themselves into a corner, the paddlers pushed off, and the canoe swept up the river and disappeared in the rain.

The light was fading ere they reached the landing beach for Ekenge, and there was yet the journey of four miles through the dripping forest to be undertaken. It was decided that she should go on ahead with the children in order to get them food and put them to sleep, and that Mr. Bishop and one or two men should follow with dry clothes, cooking utensils, and the door and window needed for the hut, whilst the carriers would come on later with the loads. As Mary faced the forest, now dark and mysterious, and filled with the noises of the night, a feeling of helplessness and fear came over her. What unseen perils might she not meet? What would she find at the end? How would she be received on this occasion? Would the natives be fighting or drinking or dancing? Her heart played the coward; she felt a desire to turn and flee. But she remembered that never in her life had God failed her, not once had there been cause to doubt the reality of His guidance and care. Still



the shrinking was there; she could not even move her lips in prayer; she could only look up and utter inwardly one appealing word, "Father!"

Surely no stranger procession had footed it through the African forest. First came a boy, about eleven years of age, tired and afraid, a box containing tea, sugar, and bread upon his head, his garments, soaked with the rain, clinging to his body, his feet slipping in the black mud. Behind him was another boy, eight years old, in tears, bearing a kettle and pots. With these, a little fellow of three, weeping loudly, tried hard to keep up, and close at his heels trotted a maiden of five, also shaken with sobs. Their white mother formed the rear. On one arm was slung a bundle, and astride her shoulders sat a baby girl, no light burden, so that she had to pull herself along with the aid of branches and twigs. She was singing nonsense-snatches to lighten the way for the little ones, but the tears were perilously near her own eyes. Had ever such a company marched out against the entrenched forces of evil? Surely, God had made a mistake in going to Okoyong in such a guise? And yet, He often chooses the weakest things of this world to confound and defeat the mighty.

### *Winning Her First Victory. (P. 70-71.)*

The return to normal conditions brought her into active conflict with the powers of evil. The mistress of a harem in the vicinity bought a good-looking young woman whom the master coveted, and she became a slave-wife. She appeared sullen and unhappy. One afternoon Mary saw her mudding a house that was being built for a new free-born wife, and spoke to her kindly in passing. A few minutes later the girl made her way to one of her master's farms, and sat down in the hut of a slave. The latter was alarmed, knowing well what the consequences would be, but she refused to move. The man went off to his work, and she walked into the forest and hanged herself. Next morning the slave was brought in heavily ironed, and at a palaver, the master and his relatives decreed he must die; they had been degraded by being associated in this way with a common slave.

Mary, who was present, protested against the injustice of the sentence; the man, she argued, had done no wrong; it was not his fault that the girl had gone to his hut. "But," was the reply, "he has used sorcery and put the thought into the girl's mind, and the witch-doctor has pronounced him guilty." She persisted. The crowd became angry and excited; they surged

round her demanding why a stranger who was there on sufferance should interfere with the dignity and power of free-born people, and clamored for the instant death of the prisoner. Threats were shouted, guns and swords were waved, and the position grew critical, but she stood her ground, quiet and cool and patient. Her tact, her good humour, that spiritual force which seemed to emanate from her in times of peril, at last prevailed. The noise and confusion calmed down, and ultimately it was decided to spare the man's life. She had won her first victory.

### *Building the First Church in Okoyong. (P. 86-87.)*

Her next thought was for the church and schoolhouse. A mistress of missionary strategy, she wished to build this at Ifako, in order that she might control a larger area, but the chiefs for long showed no interest in the matter. One morning, however, an Ifako boy sought her with the message, "My master wants you." She thought the command somewhat peremptory, but went. To her surprise she found the ground cleared; posts, sticks, and mud ready, and the chiefs waiting her orders. She designed a hall thirty feet by twenty-five, with two rooms at the end for her own use, in case storm or sickness or palaver should prevent her going home. Work was started, and not a single slave was employed in the carrying of the material or in the construction. King Eyo sent the mats, some thousands in number, for the roof, and free women carried them the four miles from the beach, plastered the walls, moulded the mud-seats, beat the floor, and cleared up, and all cheerfully, and without thought of reward. Doors and windows were still wanting, but she asked for the services of a carpenter from Calabar to do this bit of work; and meanwhile the humble building, the first ever erected for the worship of God in Okoyong, was formally opened.

It was a day of days for the people. Mary had prepared them for it, and all appeared in their new Sunday attire, which, in many cases, consisted of nothing more than a clean skin. But the contents of various Mission boxes had been kept for the occasion, and the children after being washed, were decked for the first time in garments of many shapes and colour—"The wearing of a garment," said Mary, "never fails to create self-respect." It was a radiant and excited company that gathered in the hall. There was perhaps little depth in their emotion, but she regarded the event as a step towards better things. Her idea was to separate the day from the rest, and to make it a means of bringing about cleanliness and personal dignity, while



it also imposed upon the people a little of that discipline which they so much needed.

The chiefs were present, and they voluntarily made the promise before all that the house would be kept sacred to God and His service, that the slave-women and children would be sent to it for instruction, that no weapon of warfare would be carried into it, and that it would be a sanctuary for those who fled to it for refuge.

Services and day-school were now held regularly in the hall. The latter was well attended, all the pupils showing eagerness to learn "book" and many making rapid progress.

### *Combating the Ordeal by Poison. (P. 101-102.)*

One afternoon the women came running to "Ma" saying that the elder chief, Ekpenyong, was bent on taking the poison ordeal. When she reached his yard she found him in a fury, shouting and threatening, the women remonstrating, the slaves weeping. It was some time ere she could learn the cause of the uproar. A man from a neighboring village had been about whispering that Ekpenyong had slain his nephew, in order that his own son might absorb the inheritance. Ekpenyong was determined to undergo the test, and in accordance with native law, which gave the right to a freeman to call others of equal rank to share the trial with him, he demanded that his brother Edem—who it was alleged had instigated the man to make the accusation—should also take the poison.

When Mary had grasped the situation she ridiculed the attitude of the chief, scolded him unmercifully, and at last secured his promise not to carry out his threat. As a guarantee of his good faith she claimed possession of the eséré beans. He denied that he had any. With the help of his womenkind she made a secret search, and found eleven beans at the bottom of a basket, which she conveyed in the darkness to her hut. As more beans could not be obtained until the morning she felt that all was well for the night. Shouting, however, made her run back. Mad with drink, the chief was clinging to a bag which the women were endeavoring to seize. He was hitting out at them with his heavy hand, and most of them were bleeding. "There is poison in that bag," they cried. "No, Ma, only my palm-nuts and cartridges." Quietly, firmly, persistently, she demanded the bag. He threw it at her. Opening it she found palm-nuts and cartridges. For a moment she looked foolish, but diving deeper she pulled out no fewer than forty of the deadly beans. "I'll take the liberty of keeping these," she said coolly,

but with a swiftly beating heart. "No, no," he shouted, and his followers joined him in protest. Outwardly calm, she walked between the lines of armed men, ironically bidding them take the bag from her. But their hands were held, and she passed safely through, reached her hut, handed the beans to Mr. Ovens, and returned to the scene to pacify the crowd.

Next morning she learnt to her consternation that Ekpenyong had risen stealthily during the night and gone on his errand of death. Fortunately a chief some miles off detained him by force until she arrived. She stuck resolutely to him, and as all the more powerful chiefs came over to her side from sheer admiration of her pluck, he had eventually to abandon his purpose.

### *Serving as Peace-Maker. (P. 110-112.)*

Reaching the first town belonging to the belligerents she found it so silent and dark that she began to imagine the chief was right, and she had come on a wild-goose chase. She crept quietly up to the house of an old freewoman whose granddaughter had once lived with her; there was a cautious movement within and a whispered, "Who's there?" She had barely answered, when she was surrounded by a band of armed men, whose dark bodies were like shadows in the night. In a few moments they were joined by scores of others, and the greatest confusion prevailed. She was asked what her business was and who were her informants, but ultimately the chiefs permitted her to remain, and the women saw to her comfort.

After conferring together the chiefs thanked her for coming at such discomfort to herself, and promised that no fighting, so far as they were concerned, would take place until she heard the whole story.

"All the same," they averred, "we must fight to wipe out the disgrace that has been put on us—see here are men badly wounded. Now, Ma, go to bed, and we shall wake you at cock-crow, and you can accompany us."

This meant an hour's rest, which she urgently needed. At second cock-crow she was called, but before she was steady on her feet they were off and away down the steep hillside and through the stream at the foot like a herd of wild goats. The women were at every house.

"Run, Ma!" they cried.

Run! Was she not running as fast as her weak and breathless state allowed her? But she soon lost sight of the warriors, and could only fall back upon prayer.



A hundred yards from the village of the enemy she came upon the band in the bush making preparations for attack; the war-fever was at its height, and the air resounded with wild yells. Walking quietly forward she addressed them as one would speak to school-boys, telling them to hold their peace and behave like men and not like fools. Passing on to the village she encountered a solid wall of armed men. Giving them greeting, she got no reply. The silence was ominous. Twitting them on their perfect manners she went up to them, and was about to force a passage. Then a strange thing happened.

From out of the sullen line of dark-skinned warriors there stepped an old man, who came and knelt at her feet.

“Ma, we thank you for coming. We admit the wounding of the chief but it was the act of one man and not the fault of the town. We beg you to use your influence with the injured party in the interests of peace.”

It was the chief whom she had travelled in the rain to see and heal when she first came to Okoyong. Her act of self-sacrifice and courage had borne fruit after many days.

She was so thankful that her impulse was to run back to their opponents in the forest and arrange matters there and then; but she restrained herself, and instead, purposely told the men with an air of authority to remain where they were while her wants were attended to.

“I am not going to starve while you fight,” she said, “and meanwhile you can find a comfortable seat in the bush where I can confer with the two sides; choose two or three men of good address and good judgment for the purpose.”

They obeyed her like children.

When the two deputies from the other side came forward, two chiefs laid down their arms and went and knelt before them and held their feet, saying it was foolish and unjust to punish the whole district for the action of a drunken boy, begging them to place the matter before the White Ma, and expressing their willingness to pay whatever fine might be imposed. She, too, knelt and begged that magnanimity might be shown, and that arbitration might be substituted for war. So novel a proposal was not agreed to at once. The next few hours witnessed scenes of wild excitement, rising sometimes to frenzy. Bands of men kept advancing from both sides and joining in the palaver, and every arrival increased the indignation and the resolution to abide by the old, manlier way of war. She was well-nigh worn out, but her wonderful patience and

tact, coupled with her knowledge of all the outs and ins of their character, again won her the victory. It was agreed that a fine should settle the quarrel, and one was imposed which she thought exorbitant in the extreme, but the delinquents accepted it, and promptly paid part in trade gin.

### *Combating the Murder of Twins. (P. 124-126.)*

Again the cry, "Run, Ma! run!" this time from two boys. It was a case of twins born of a Calabar mother, who had come to Okoyong after trade began. The father and his womenkind were furious, and the mother lay deserted and alone. Mary took the two babies into her lap, and as they were Calabar twins sent word to the elder chief. The answer she received was "Ahem!" But the messenger added, "A big lady said, 'Why don't you take the twins to Calabar?'"

She sent next to the younger chief, and asked him to come and confer with her at a distance.

After two hours' weary waiting the reply was, "I am not coming, what should I come for? Should I tell my Mother what to do? Let her do what she sees fit."

"Well," said Mary, "as one chief says, 'Ahem' and the other gives no command, I shall take the children by a back road to my own house, and during the night the mother can follow, and we will see how things turn round."

On being told that she had brought twins to the house, Edem groaned and said, "Then I cannot go to my Mother's house any more. Are they upstairs?"

"Yes," said the messenger, "and they are in her own bed."

He groaned again, "No, no, I cannot ever go any more."

Mary went to his yard to see a sick baby, whom she had nursed back from death's door after the witch-doctors had done their best with their charms and medicine, but the mother held the child tightly in her arms and said, "Ma, you shall not touch her!" She turned away, her heart sore.

On the Sunday rain fell all day, and she could not leave one of the children who was ill, but in the late evening she took two lanterns and went to the roadside and held a short service with the few prepared to come, and who huddled together in the rain. But none of them guessed how near to tears the speaker was. She felt the alienation from her people keenly; it was the greatest trial that had come to her, but she was resolved not to give in.

One of the twins died, and some days later Edem offered



her a present of yams, but she declined the gift, as it might be mistaken for a bribe to her conscience. He remonstrated, but she remained firm, although it cost her much. Gradually, however, he and his House showed contrition, and the shadow passed away.

Then a chief from another village came, also with a present of yams. Going on his knees he held her feet and begged her not to give up the child. "You are our Mother; and a woman has proved stronger than all the men of the tribe; we will be able to believe in all you ask us by and by, but have patience with us."

When he was gone a message came: "A chief from a distance wants to see you; come for a little."

This man was from a turbulent part of Okoyong and given to fighting and plundering.

"I live in my house as ever I did," was her spirited reply; "and if any one wishes to see me I am here." She felt pretty sure of her ground, though she could not help trembling for the result.

The strangers arrived, and Edem with them, and chairs and mats were placed for them in the court. To her surprise she was asked for her advice, and the visitor went away convinced that the new ways were better than the old.

The elder chief, Ekpenyong, next sent and begged for forgiveness. "The Mother cannot keep a strong heart against her son. Are you not the hope and strength and counsellor of my life? Forgive me, for it was foolishness, I have not been taught from my youth, and have never seen a twin."

Thus good came out of the trial, and the bonds that bound her to the people were strengthened. What was still more remarkable than the attitude of the chiefs was the fact that the husband took the twin-mother and the surviving child home.

### *Summarizing the Progress Made. (P. 159, 159-161.)*

"Of results as affecting the condition and conduct of our people generally, it is more easy to speak. Raiding, plundering, the stealing of slaves, have almost entirely ceased. Any person from any place can come now for trade or pleasure, and stay wherever they choose, their persons and property being as safe as in Calabar. For fully a year we have heard of nothing like violence from even the most backward of our people. They have thanked me for restraining them in the past, and begged me to be their consul, as they neither wished black man nor white

man to be their king. It would be impossible, apart from a belief in God's particular and personal providence in answer to prayer, to account for the ready obedience and submission to our judgment which was accorded to us. It seemed sometimes to be almost miraculous that hordes of armed, drunken, passion-swayed men should give heed and chivalrous homage to a woman, and one who had neither wealth nor outward display of any kind to produce the slightest sentiment in her favour. But such was the case, and we do not recollect one instance of insubordination." . . .

"No tribe was formerly so feared because of their utter disregard of human life, but human life is now safe. No chief ever died without the sacrifice of many lives, but this custom has now ceased. Only last month the man who, for age, wealth, and general influence, exceeded all the other chiefs in Okoyong, died from the effects of cold caught three months before. We trembled, as they are at some distance from us, and every drop of European drink which could be bought from all the towns around was bought at once, and canoes were sent from every hamlet with all the produce at command to Duke Town for some more, and all was consumed before the people dispersed from the funeral. But the only death resulting has been that of a man, who, on being blamed by the witch-doctors, went and hanged himself because the chiefs in attendance—drunk as they were—refused to give him the poison ordeal. Some chiefs, gathered for palaver at our house on the day of his death, in commenting on the wonderful change said, 'Ma, you white people are God Almighty. No other power could have done this.'

"With regard to infanticide and twin-murder we can speak hopefully. It will doubtless take some time to develop in them the spirit of self-sacrifice to the extent of nursing the vital spark for the mere love of God and humanity among the body of the people. The ideals of those emerging from heathenism are almost necessarily low. What the foreigner does is all very well for the foreigner, but the force of habit or something more subtle, evidently excuses the practice of the virtue among themselves. Of course there are exceptions. All the evidence goes to show that something more tangible than sentiment or principle determines the conduct of the multitude, even among those avowedly Christian. But with all this there has dawned on them the fact that life is worth saving, even at the risk of one's own; and though chiefs and subjects alike, less than two years ago, refused to hear of the saving of twins, we have already their promise and the first instalment of their fidelity



to their promise in the persons of two baby girls aged six and five months respectively, who have already won the hearts of some of our neighbours and the love of all the school children. Seven women have literally touched them, and all the people, including the most practical of the chiefs, come to the house and hold their palavers in full view of where the children are being nursed. One chief, who, with fierce gesticulations, some years ago protested that we must draw the line at twins, and that they should never be brought to light in his lifetime, brought one of his children who was very ill, two months ago, and laid it on our knee alongside the twin already there, saying with a sob in his voice, 'There! they are all yours, living or dying, they are all yours. Do what you like with mine.' "

### *The First Communion at Ekenge. (P. 190-191.)*

August 5, 1903, on the fifteenth anniversary of that notable Sunday in 1888 when Mary settled at Ekenge, the first communion service in Okoyong was held. It crowned her service there, and put a seal upon the wonderful work she had accomplished for civilization and for Christ. Alone, she had done in Okoyong what it had taken a whole Mission to do in Calabar. The old order of heathenism had been broken up, the business of life was no longer fighting and killing, women were free from outrage and the death menace, slaves had begun to realize that they were human beings with human rights, industry and trade were established, peace reigned. Above all, people were openly living the Christian life, and many lads were actively engaged in Church work.

No congregation had been formally organized, but the readiness of the young people to join the Church was brought to the notice of the Rev. W. T. Weir, who was stationed at Creek Town, with the result that he was appointed to go up and conduct the necessary services.

On the Saturday night in August corresponding to the one when she arrived, a preparatory service was held in the hall beneath the Mission House, and in the presence of the people seven young Christians were received into the Church by baptism. More were coming forward, but the fears of their friends succeeded in preventing them. "Wait and see," they urged, "until we know what the thing is." Some of the parents anxiously asked "Ma" whether the ceremony was in any way connected with *mbiam* (witchcraft).

On Sunday came a great throng, which filled the hall and overflowed into the grounds, many sitting on native stools and

chairs, and even on gin-boxes. Before the communion service she presented eleven of the children, including six she had rescued, for baptism.

It was a quiet and beautiful day, with the hush that comes with God's rest-day all the world over. As the company gathered to the first Memorial Table in Okoyong, she thought of all the years that lay behind, and was greatly moved. In the stillness the old Scottish Psalm tunes rose thrilling with the gratitude and praise of a new-born people. After the bread and wine had been partaken of, thanks were returned by the singing of the 103rd Psalm to the tune *Stroudwater*. When the third and fourth verses were being sung, she seemed to be lost in a trance of thought, her face had a far-away look, and tears stood in her eyes. She was thinking of the greatness of God's love that could win even the oppressed people of dark Okoyong.

### *Appointed as a British Magistrate. (P. 235-236, 236-237.)*

Recognizing that "Ma" had an influence with the natives, which it was impossible to abrogate, the Government decided to invest her with the powers of a magistrate.

The native courts of Nigeria consist of a number of leading chiefs in each district, who take turns to try cases between native and native. The District Commissioner is *ex-officio* president of those within his sphere, and each court is composed of a permanent vice-president and three chiefs.

Before leaving Itu she was asked informally whether she would consent to take the superintendence of Court affairs in the district, as she had done in Okoyong, but on a recognized basis. If she agreed, the Court would be transferred to Ikotobong to suit her convenience and safeguard her strength. She was pleased that the Government thought her worthy of the position, and was favourable to the idea. Already she was by common consent the chief arbiter in all disputes, and wielded unique power, but she thought that if she were also the official agent of the Government she might increase the range of her usefulness. Her aim was to help the poor and the oppressed, and specially to protect her own downtrodden sex and secure their rights, and to educate the people up to the Christian standard of conduct; and such an appointment would give her additional advantage and authority. "It will be a good chance," she said, "to preach the Gospel, and to create confidence and inspire hope in these poor wretches, who fear white and black man alike; while it will neither hamper my work nor restrict



my liberty.” On stating that she would do the work she was told that a salary was attached to the post, but she declared that nothing would induce her to accept it. “I’m born and bred and am in every fibre of my being, a voluntary.” . . .

She took over the books in October, acting then and often afterwards, as clerk, and carrying through all the tedious clerical duties. It was strange and terrible, but to her not unfamiliar work. She came face to face with the worst side of a low-down savage people, and dealt with the queerest of queer cases. One of the first was a murder charge in which a woman was involved. Women were indeed at the bottom of almost every mischief and palaver in the country. With marriage was mixed up poisoning, sacrifice, exactions, oaths, debts, and cruelty unspeakable. Mary was often sick with the loathing of it all. “God help these poor helpless women!” she wrote. “What a crowd of people I have had today, and how debased! They are just like brutes in regard to women. I have had a murder, an *eséré* case (poison ordeal), a suicide, a man for branding his slave-wife all over her face and body, a man with a gun who has shot four persons—it is all horrible!”

### *Death of Mary Slessor. (P. 343-344.)*

“As the evening wore on she became quieter, but had a great thirst, and begged that a little bit of the ice might be put into her mouth. She had a very quiet night, without any recurrence of the former symptoms, and I thought she was somewhat better, until the morning revealed how exhausted she was. The old restlessness began again, and I got a lad from the school to take a message over to Itu to Dr. Robertson. My report was that Miss Slessor had had a quiet night, but was suffering from extreme exhaustion. The doctor sent over some medicine with instructions, and she seemed again to be able to lie quietly. Once when I was attending to her she said, ‘Ma, it’s no use,’ and again she prayed, ‘*O Abasi sana mi yok*’ (‘O God release me’). As I fed her with milk or chicken soup, she would sometimes sign to me, or just say, ‘Ma.’ A lonely feeling came into my heart, and as I had to send a message to Ikotobong, I asked Miss Couper to cycle over in the afternoon. She stayed all the afternoon, and when she left, Miss Slessor was still quiet, and her pulse was fairly good. This was the 12th.

“The girls—Janie, Annie, Maggie, Alice and Whitie—were all with me, and we made our arrangements for the night-watch. It was not a grand room with costly furnishings; the walls were of reddish-brown mud, very roughly built; the floor was of

cement, with a rug here and there, and the roof corrugated iron. Besides the bed, wash-handstand, and a chair or two, there was a chest of drawers which had belonged to her mother, and in which was found all that was needed for the last service. Her greatness was never in her surroundings, for she paid little attention to these, but in the hidden life which we caught glimpses of now and then when she forgot herself and revealed what was in her mind with regard to the things that count.

“As the hours wore on, several times she signed to us to turn her, and we noticed that her breathing was becoming more difficult. It was a very dark night, and the natives were sound asleep in their houses, but I sent off two of the girls to rouse two men to go to Itu; and we waited anxiously the coming of the doctor. A strange uneasiness seemed to come upon us. All the girls were round the bedside and now and then one or two would begin to weep. The clock had been forgotten, and we did not know the time. A cock crew, and one of the girls said, ‘Day must be dawning,’ but when I drew aside the curtain there was nothing but pitch darkness. It was not nearly daybreak and we felt that the death-angel was drawing very near. Several times a change passed over the dear face, and the girls burst out into wild weeping; they knew only too well the sign of the dread visitor. They wished to rush away, but I told them they must stay, and together we watched until at 3.30 A.M. God took her to Himself. There was no great struggle at the end; just a gradual diminishing of the forces of nature, and *Ma Akamba*, ‘The Great Mother,’ entered into the presence of the King.”

### *Summary of Her Achievements. (P. 348-350.)*

Miss Slessor had a sure consciousness of her limitations, and knew she was nothing but a forerunner, who opened up the way and made it possible for others to come in and take up the work on normal lines. Both in the sphere of mission exploration and in the region of ideas she possessed the qualities of the pioneer,—imagination, daring, patience—and like all idealists she met with opposition. It was not, however, the broad policy she originated that was criticised, so much as matters of detail, and no doubt there was sometimes justification for this. She admitted that she had no gifts as an organizer, and when she engaged in constructive work it was because there was no one else to do it.

What she accomplished, therefore, cannot be measured only by the visible results of her own handiwork. The Hope Waddell



Institute was the outcome of her suggestions, and from it has gone out a host of lads to teach in schools throughout the country, and to influence the lives of thousands of others. She laid the foundations of civilized order in Okoyong, upon which regular church and school life has now been successfully built. When she unlocked the Enyong Creek, some were amused at the little kirks and huts she constructed in the bush, and asked what they were worth—just a few posts plastered with mud, and a sheet or two of corrugated iron. But they represented a spiritual force and influence far beyond their material value. They were erected with her life-blood, they embodied her love for her Master and for the people, they were outposts, the first dim lights in the darkness of a dark land, they stood for Christ Himself and His Cross. And today there exist throughout the district nearly fifty churches and schools in which the work is being carried on carefully and methodically by trained minds. The membership numbers nearly 1500, and there is a large body of candidates and enquirers and over 2000 scholars.

One cannot estimate the value of her general influence on the natives; it extended over an area of more than 2000 square miles, from all parts of which they came to seek her help and advice, whilst her fame reached even to Northern Nigeria, where she was spoken of as the “good White Ma who lived alone.” To West Africans, a woman is simply a chattel to be used for pleasure and gain, but she gave them a new conception of womanhood, and gained their reverence and confidence and obedience. Although she came to upset all their ideas and customs, which represented home and habit and life itself to them, they loved her and would not let the wind blow on her. She thus made it easy for other women agents to live and work amongst them; and probably there is no similar mission field where these can dwell in such freedom and safety. And through her womanhood she gave them some idea of the power and beauty of the religion which could make that womanhood possible. Her influence will not cease, for in the African bush, where there are no daily newspapers to crowd out events and impressions, and tradition is tenacious, she will be remembered in hut and harem and by forest camp fire, and each generation will hand down to the next the story of the Great White Mother who lived and toiled for their good.

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